

Schedule by Category

General & First-timers

Cindy Sproles (Friday, 2:00)

Understanding the Basics

In this class, we discuss the basics of writing, especially important for first timers. Content, hooks, common mistakes that plague the new writer. Tips that help authors self-edit. We will discuss the importance of learning to self-edit and how simple techniques can take your manuscript from ho-hum to polished.

Rebekah Tussing (Friday, 3:00)

The Beginner's Guide to Elevated Writing

Make your writing come to life with simple tips and tricks that can take your voice from good to great. Learn how to choose exactly the right words to make your sentences sparkle and do justice to the incredible ideas in your head.

Rebekah Tussing (Friday, 4:00)

Grammar Q & A

Is it “who” or “whom”? How do quotation marks affect different punctuation? What on earth is subjunctive mood? If any of these grammar questions always trip you up--or if any others do--you don't want to miss this session. Bring your burning grammar questions to have them answered by an expert!

Ann Byle (Saturday, 10:00)

Demystifying Book Proposals

Each book proposal is different, but each one has the same building blocks that apply to fiction and nonfiction book proposals. We'll look at these blocks—including overviews, audience, comparables, marketing plan, author bio, TOC, chapter summaries, and other details—to help you create a great book proposal.

Linda Glaz (Saturday, 1:00)

How to Get and Work with an Agent

Know the ins and outs of what an agent wants to see from potential clients. What to send, how to send, and how to get it right. Also included will be a short session on pitching to industry professionals so that you'll feel confident with no “deer in the headlights” moments.

Ginger Kolbaba (Saturday, 2:00)

How to Work Well with an Editor

Many writers make the simplest mistakes, which can lead to getting their work rejected. But with some simple attention to details, they could become an editor's best friend and go-to writer. This workshop goes through practical tips to make your work sparkle.

Ann Byle (Saturday, 3:00)

The Real Life of a Writer

We learn a lot about craft at conferences like this one; we hear about the importance of connections; we learn a lot about platform. But how does a writer build a “real” life—an authentic, honest, loving, God-centered writing life? Discover what a real writing life looks and lives like.

Fiction

Caroline Cilento (Friday, 2:00)

What Editors of Cozy Mysteries Are Looking For

The cozy mystery is steadily growing in popularity. But what makes a cozy mystery stand out to an editor? In this workshop we'll look at the elements of a cozy mystery and what will catch an editor's eye.

Angela Hunt (Friday, 3:00)

The Plot Skeleton

If you were to put on a pair of X-ray glasses, you'd see that most people have an identical skeleton. In the same way, stories that work have an identical plot skeleton. Knowing what it is and how to create it will make plotting much easier and will enable you to write a complete synopsis on one page without breaking a sweat. The plot skeleton works for everything from a picture book to a full-length novel, so come learn what it's all about!

Bill Myers (Friday, 4:00)

Creating Unforgettable Characters

Why do readers often remember characters far more than they remember plot? What are the keys to creating these kind of characters?

Linda Glaz (Saturday, 10:00)

Deep, Deep Deep, Deeper Point of View

Can we go any deeper in today's writing? Do we want to? Checking the nooks and crannies of our novels for obvious signs of overuse in "telling" the story. How to make it flow seamlessly without all of the nos that editors and agents hate to find.

Angela Hunt (Saturday, 1:00)

How to Put Tension on Every Page

How do you keep a reader turning pages? By ratcheting up the tension! Most beginning writers think "tension" means a car chase or a fight, but it's more—and less—than that, and it's integral to your story. You should never have blah pages, and increasing tension is how you avoid them. Come and learn how it's done!

PeggySue Wells (Saturday, 2:00)

Dynamic Dialog

"God bless us, one and all." "Off with her head!" "Go ahead, make my day." Like delicious desserts, dialog is often a reader's favorite part of a story. Here's how to write great dialog readers will quote for generations.

PeggySue Wells (Saturday, 3:00)

Sensational Settings

Les Misérables would not be the same story if not set in France. *Peter Pan* is a memorable flight into fancy because first there was Neverland. A sensational setting is where your story absolutely must take place—the three-dimensional time, place, and mood as alive as your characters.

Nonfiction

PeggySue Wells (Friday, 2:00)

How to Write a Feature Article

Expand your reach, write concisely, and produce power-packed, super-infused articles that have readers taking action and editors asking for more.

Cindy Sproles (Friday, 3:00)

Writing Devotions that Strike the Soul

In this class, we utilize the hook, book, look, and took method of writing devotions. We'll discuss aspects that stop the reader from reading and offer tips that draw readers in and providing them the *ahhh* moment that strikes the soul. There is no one specific right or wrong way to write a devotion, but there are elements that are a must for a devotion to make an impact.

Ginger Kolbaba (Friday, 4:00)

The Art of Ghostwriting

Your next-door neighbor was a secret agent during the 1950s? A woman at your church has won the blue ribbon for the best pickles in the county fair for 12 years straight? Tell their stories! This workshop will give all the details on how to ghostwrite a book or article--from figuring out the best stories to getting the information you need to navigating rights and payment issues.

Caroline Cilento (Saturday, 10:00)

Breaking into the Guideposts Market

For over seventy years, *Guideposts* has been a trusted source of inspiration. From true stories of everyday people overcoming obstacles, to inspiring devotionals to encourage and uplift, to fiction that offers a momentary escape from reality, *Guideposts* strives to encourage the world. In this workshop we'll walk through the various publications, audiences, and voices, and how to write for *Guideposts*.

Jim Watkins (Saturday, 1:00)

From Platform to Publication

If you're a speaker, you need a book to expand your audience, but you can't simply transcribe your talk. Jim, a speaker turned author of 20 books and 2,000 articles will explain the differences in approach on the stage and the page and share practical tips for turning your talks into books.

Mary Alice Trent (Saturday, 2:00)

Creative Nonfiction: From Telling to "Showing" Your Life on Paper

Writing a memoir can be a challenge, but much of what you learn about good fiction writing applies—including the concept of showing instead of telling.

Alan Blanchard (Saturday, 3:00)

Journalistic Writing

Sometimes the best way to keep your writing process moving and get published is to write news articles. There's a market for these every single day in thousands of newspapers, and in your local newspaper. This session will help you come up with ideas and offer advice in how to write for newspapers.

Specialty Writing

Lin Johnson (Friday, 2:00)

Writing Bible Study Guides

Tap into the small group and personal study market with Bible study guides, or learn to write effective ones for your church or organization. Learn key principles for studying the Bible and how to translate them into effective discussion questions.

Bob Hostetler (Friday, 3:00)

Writing Outside the Box

This session will open your eyes to the publishing opportunities beyond the memoir or Great American Novel. There are various kinds of writing you can do from articles to business writing to greeting cards, to ... well, come find out!

Rachael Phillips (Friday, 4:00)

Column Writing – How Should I Do It? And Why?

Art Buchwald, Mike Royko, Dave Barry, and Rachael's personal patron saint, Erma Bombeck, all wrote during the golden era of newspapers. With the arrival of the Information Age, however, newspapers and newspaper columns appear to be on the outs. Why write a column? In this session, Rachael, a columnist for more than a decade, offers reasons why to write a column and tips for meeting deadlines with fresh, relevant material.

Bill Myers (Saturday, 10:00)

Writing Humor

Of all the tools in a writer's toolbox, this is one of the most powerful. And there's no mystery to it. Like every other tool, it can be learned and practiced.

Bill Myers (Saturday, 1:00)

Screenwriting

Keys to writing a great screenplay.

Bob Hostetler (Saturday, 2:00)

Boost Article Sales with Sidebars

This session uses slides of actual articles and sidebars to help you increase your sales, credits and effectiveness by learning to write and submit "sidebars." Discusses the four primary emphases of a sidebar.

Mary Alice Trent (Saturday, 3:00)

From Finding Inspiration to Write, to Settling on a Topic, to Writing a Poem that Matters

Poetry is a universal way of communicating. Are you a poet in the making? Or do you wonder how poetry matters in today's world? This session is for you.

Platform & Marketing

Katelyn Bolds (Friday, 2:00)

Social Media and the Writer's Platform

Ever wonder how important your author's platform is? The answer is very; and it varies. We'll cover the basics of what you need to start your author platform, how to create a social media focus, and how to gain interactions.

Katelyn Bolds (Friday, 3:00)

Best Practices: Social Media Followings

Ever wonder how to cultivate a social media following as an author? We'll take a look at a few different authors and compare their audience interaction. Learn about Facebook Live, YouTube, Instagram and Facebook Stories, and more.

Jim Watkins (Friday, 4:00)

Websites 101

Having a website is an important element in your "platform" as an author and publishers demand platform. Jim has hosted a website since 1997 with millions of unique visitors and will share the latest trends in hosting and developing your website/blog. Specifically, he will demonstrate how to use WordPress, the most popular--and easiest to use--website developing tool.

Bob Hostetler (Saturday, 10:00)

Blogging Your Way to Publication

How to get started, how to get noticed, and how to move from blog to print.

Ginger Kolbaba (Saturday, 1:00)

The Business Side of Writing

Every writer wants to be taken seriously and treated as a professional. But there's so much to learn--and so much of it has nothing to do with the actual art of writing. How do we navigate the business side successfully? This workshop will look at tips for how you can earn professional treatment, as well as tips to make the business side of the industry flow more smoothly, such as how to handle schedules, figuring out a payment system, and what items are tax-deductible.

Cindy Sproles (Saturday, 2:00)

I Can Self-Publish Just Because I Can

Self-publishing is readily available this day in time but jumping the gun to publish before your manuscript is ready will become your Achilles heel as your career progresses. This class covers the business decision of self-publishing and its financial impact, and it discusses the importance of never skipping the steps to publication, i.e. editing, professional cover, and platform. Rejections and the purpose of them is addressed as well as understanding trends, market, and is now the right time to publish.

Jonathan Bouw (Saturday, 3:00)

How a Cover Designer Creates Great Covers

We all know how important a good cover is for a book, but what goes on in the minds of designers? How do they go from idea to execution? Hear from an artist and professional cover designer what goes into the process of creating a book cover.

Schedule by Times

Session 1 (Friday, 2:00–2:50)

Cindy Sproles (General & First-timers)

Understanding the Basics

In this class, we discuss the basics of writing, especially important for first timers. Content, hooks, common mistakes that plague the new writer. Tips that help authors self-edit. We will discuss the importance of learning to self-edit and how simple techniques can take your manuscript from ho-hum to polished.

Caroline Cilento (Fiction)

What Editors of Cozy Mysteries Are Looking For

The cozy mystery is steadily growing in popularity. But what makes a cozy mystery stand out to an editor? In this workshop we'll look at the elements of a cozy mystery and what will catch an editor's eye.

PeggySue Wells (Nonfiction)

How to Write a Feature Article

Expand your reach, write concisely, and produce power-packed, super-infused articles that have readers taking action and editors asking for more.

Lin Johnson (Specialty Writing)

Writing Bible Study Guides

Tap into the small group and personal study market with Bible study guides, or learn to write effective ones for your church or organization. Learn key principles for studying the Bible and how to translate them into effective discussion questions.

Katelyn Bolds (Platform & Marketing)

Social Media and the Writer's Platform

Ever wonder how important your author's platform is? The answer is very; and it varies. We'll cover the basics of what you need to start your author platform, how to create a social media focus, and how to gain interactions.

Session 2 (Friday, 3:00–3:50)

Rebekah Tussing (General & First-timers)

The Beginner's Guide to Elevated Writing

Make your writing come to life with simple tips and tricks that can take your voice from good to great. Learn how to choose exactly the right words to make your sentences sparkle and do justice to the incredible ideas in your head.

Angela Hunt (Fiction)

The Plot Skeleton

If you were to put on a pair of X-ray glasses, you'd see that most people have an identical skeleton. In the same way, stories that work have an identical plot skeleton. Knowing what it is and how to create it will make plotting much easier and will enable you to write a complete synopsis on one page without breaking a sweat. The plot skeleton works for everything from a picture book to a full-length novel, so come learn what it's all about!

Cindy Sproles (Nonfiction)*Writing Devotions that Strike the Soul*

In this class, we utilize the hook, book, look, and took method of writing devotions. We'll discuss aspects that stop the reader from reading and offer tips that draw readers in and providing them the *ahhh* moment that strikes the soul. There is no one specific right or wrong way to write a devotion, but there are elements that are a must for a devotion to make an impact.

Bob Hostetler (Specialty Writing)*Writing Outside the Box*

This session will open your eyes to the publishing opportunities beyond the memoir or Great American Novel. There are various kinds of writing you can do from articles to business writing to greeting cards, to ... well, come find out!

Katelyn Bolds (Platform & Marketing)*Best Practices: Social Media Followings*

Ever wonder how to cultivate a social media following as an author? We'll take a look at a few different authors and compare their audience interaction. Learn about Facebook Live, YouTube, Instagram and Facebook Stories, and more.

Session 3 (Friday, 4:00–4:50)

Rebekah Tussing (General & First-timers)*Grammar Q & A*

Is it "who" or "whom"? How do quotation marks affect different punctuation? What on earth is subjunctive mood? If any of these grammar questions always trip you up--or if any others do--you don't want to miss this session. Bring your burning grammar questions to have them answered by an expert!

Bill Myers (Fiction)*Creating Unforgettable Characters*

Why do readers often remember characters far more than they remember plot? What are the keys to creating these kind of characters?

Ginger Kolbaba (Nonfiction)*The Art of Ghostwriting*

Your next-door neighbor was a secret agent during the 1950s? A woman at your church has won the blue ribbon for the best pickles in the county fair for 12 years straight? Tell their stories! This workshop will give all the details on how to ghostwrite a book or article--from figuring out the best stories to getting the information you need to navigating rights and payment issues.

Rachael Phillips (Specialty Writing)*Column Writing – How Should I Do It? And Why?*

Art Buchwald, Mike Royko, Dave Barry, and Rachael's personal patron saint, Erma Bombeck, all wrote during the golden era of newspapers. With the arrival of the Information Age, however, newspapers and newspaper columns appear to be on the outs. Why write a column? In this session, Rachael, a columnist for more than a decade, offers reasons why to write a column and tips for meeting deadlines with fresh, relevant material.

Jim Watkins (Platform & Marketing)*Websites 101*

Having a website is an important element in your "platform" as an author and publishers demand platform. Jim has hosted a website since 1997 with millions of unique visitors and will share the latest trends in hosting and developing your website/blog. Specifically, he will demonstrate how to use WordPress, the most popular--and easiest to use--website developing tool.

Session 4 (Saturday, 10:00–10:50)**Ann Byle (General & First-timers)***Demystifying Book Proposals*

Each book proposal is different, but each one has the same building blocks that apply to fiction and nonfiction book proposals. We'll look at these blocks—including overviews, audience, comparables, marketing plan, author bio, TOC, chapter summaries, and other details—to help you create a great book proposal.

Linda Glaz (Fiction)*Deep, Deep Deep, Deeper Point of View*

Can we go any deeper in today's writing? Do we want to? Checking the nooks and crannies of our novels for obvious signs of overuse in "telling" the story. How to make it flow seamlessly without all of the nos that editors and agents hate to find.

Caroline Cilento (Nonfiction)*Breaking into the Guideposts Market*

For over seventy years, *Guideposts* has been a trusted source of inspiration. From true stories of everyday people overcoming obstacles, to inspiring devotionals to encourage and uplift, to fiction that offers a momentary escape from reality, *Guideposts* strives to encourage the world. In this workshop we'll walk through the various publications, audiences, and voices, and how to write for *Guideposts*.

Bill Myers (Specialty Writing)*Writing Humor*

Of all the tools in a writer's toolbox, this is one of the most powerful. And there's no mystery to it. Like every other tool, it can be learned and practiced.

Bob Hostetler (Platform & Marketing)*Blogging Your Way to Publication*

How to get started, how to get noticed, and how to move from blog to print.

Session 5 (Saturday, 1:00–1:50)**Linda Glaz (General & First-timers)***How to Get and Work with an Agent*

Know the ins and outs of what an agent wants to see from potential clients. What to send, how to send, and how to get it right. Also included will be a short session on pitching to industry professionals so that you'll feel confident with no "deer in the headlights" moments.

Angela Hunt (Fiction)

How to Put Tension on Every Page

How do you keep a reader turning pages? By ratcheting up the tension! Most beginning writers think “tension” means a car chase or a fight, but it’s more—and less—than that, and it’s integral to your story. You should never have blah pages, and increasing tension is how you avoid them. Come and learn how it’s done!

Jim Watkins (Nonfiction)

From Platform to Publication

If you're a speaker, you need a book to expand your audience, but you can't simply transcribe your talk. Jim, a speaker turned author of 20 books and 2,000 articles will explain the differences in approach on the stage and the page and share practical tips for turning your talks into books.

Bill Myers (Specialty Writing)

Screenwriting

Keys to writing a great screenplay.

Ginger Kolbaba (Platform & Marketing)

The Business Side of Writing

Every writer wants to be taken seriously and treated as a professional. But there’s so much to learn--and so much of it has nothing to do with the actual art of writing. How do we navigate the business side successfully? This workshop will look at tips for how you can earn professional treatment, as well as tips to make the business side of the industry flow more smoothly, such as how to handle schedules, figuring out a payment system, and what items are tax-deductible.

Session 6 (Saturday, 2:00–2:50)

Ginger Kolbaba (General & First-timers)

How to Work Well with an Editor

Many writers make the simplest mistakes, which can lead to getting their work rejected. But with some simple attention to details, they could become an editor’s best friend and go-to writer. This workshop goes through practical tips to make your work sparkle.

PeggySue Wells (Fiction)

Dynamic Dialog

“God bless us, one and all.” “Off with her head!” “Go ahead, make my day.” Like delicious desserts, dialog is often a reader’s favorite part of a story. Here’s how to write great dialog readers will quote for generations.

Mary Alice Trent (Nonfiction)

Creative Nonfiction: From Telling to “Showing” Your Life on Paper

Writing a memoir can be a challenge, but much of what you learn about good fiction writing applies—including the concept of showing instead of telling.

Bob Hostetler (Specialty Writing)

Boost Article Sales with Sidebars

This session uses slides of actual articles and sidebars to help you increase your sales, credits and effectiveness by learning to write and submit “sidebars.” Discusses the four primary emphases of a sidebar.

Cindy Sproles (Platform & Marketing)

I Can Self-Publish Just Because I Can

Self-publishing is readily available this day in time but jumping the gun to publish before your manuscript is ready will become your Achilles heel as your career progresses. This class covers the business decision of self-publishing and its financial impact, and it discusses the importance of never skipping the steps to publication, i.e. editing, professional cover, and platform. Rejections and the purpose of them is addressed as well as understanding trends, market, and is now the right time to publish.

Session 7 (Saturday, 3:00–3:50)

Ann Byle (General & First-timers)

The Real Life of a Writer

We learn a lot about craft at conferences like this one; we hear about the importance of connections; we learn a lot about platform. But how does a writer build a “real” life—an authentic, honest, loving, God-centered writing life? Discover what a real writing life looks and lives like.

PeggySue Wells (Fiction)

Sensational Settings

Les Misérables would not be the same story if not set in France. *Peter Pan* is a memorable flight into fancy because first there was Neverland. A sensational setting is where your story absolutely must take place—the three-dimensional time, place, and mood as alive as your characters.

Alan Blanchard (Nonfiction)

Journalistic Writing

Sometimes the best way to keep your writing process moving and get published is to write news articles. There’s a market for these every single day in thousands of newspapers, and in your local newspaper. This session will help you come up with ideas and offer advice in how to write for newspapers.

Mary Alice Trent (Specialty Writing)

From Finding Inspiration to Write, to Settling on a Topic, to Writing a Poem that Matters

Poetry is a universal way of communicating. Are you a poet in the making? Or do you wonder how poetry matters in today’s world? This session is for you.

Jonathan Bouw (Platform & Marketing)

How a Cover Designer Creates Great Covers

We all know how important a good cover is for a book, but what goes on in the minds of designers? How do they go from idea to execution? Hear from an artist and professional cover designer what goes into the process of creating a book cover.